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The Rig Veda and Atharva Veda.—By EDWARD V. ARNOLD,
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PROFESSOR Maurice Bloomfield is at present delighting those who are interested in Vedic study by a series of works which are the fruit of an investigation of the Atharva Veda which has extended over many years. Meanwhile it appears to have struck him that his favourite pursuit lies under some disparagement because Sanskrit scholars have hitherto been agreed that the Atharva Veda is of later date than the Rig Veda. At any rate, he has put forward a new theory, which is in substance that there existed side by side in India two dialects, for which he suggests the names “hieratic” and “popular”: in the former were written hymns which have for their theme the adoration of a given deity, in the latter charms directed to the attainment of a specific object (*The Atharva Veda*, p. 46). The hymns of the Atharva Veda are, according to this theory, not merely in their substance, but also in their form (except so far as that has suffered from the hands of their ancient editors) fully as ancient as those of the Rig Veda. It follows that the metres of the Atharva Veda, and in particular the ‘popular’ Anuṣṭubh, are not developed from the corresponding metres of the Rig Veda, but are independent in their origin and parallel in their development.

In this new theory there are certain points which may readily be admitted; as that the matter of the Atharvan, the book of medicinal charms, may be rooted in prehistoric antiquity, and that two dialects such as Bloomfield describes may very well have existed synchronously. But that on such slight grounds we should throw aside, as due to reasoning “nearly always one-sided and subjective, sometimes patently erroneous,” the general view that “the language” (and the metre) “of the Atharvanic hymns is chronologically later than that of the hieratic hymns” by no means follows. The general view is not merely the accepted tradition of the Indians, but has been raised practically to the position of a scientifically demonstrated truth by the grammatical labours of Whitney and his pupils, embodied in earlier volumes of the

Journal. To abandon this view is to make it necessary to rebuild from the foundation our conceptions of the history of the Veda.

It is therefore, I think, matter of regret that Bloomfield should have put forward his new theory in a work the scope of which "does not permit the full discussion of this important question": or in other words, does not permit him to give adequate reasons for his proposition, or even to explain what historical relation he conceives to exist between the "hieratic" and "popular" dialects. He does indeed make the attempt to reduce the current belief to an absurdity; but this he does only by adducing evidence that in the Atharvanic dialect and the Atharvanic hymns a form is found here and there which is specially related to forms in the cognate languages, or is borrowed from the "hieratic" diction. In spite of this the great mass of facts which confirm the accepted view compel Professor Bloomfield gradually to shift from his own position, till at last he writes (on page 49), "Such inferences as may be gathered from the metres, sense, and linguistic forms are rarely of such a nature as to prove the superior tradition of the AV. Occasional instances like AV. *kr̥dhi* for RV. *kuru*, AV. *viṣva* for RV. *sarva*, noted above, are almost forceless."

With Professor Bloomfield's criticism in detail I do not propose here to deal, since in my view it has been sufficiently refuted by Professor Hermann Oldenberg in a recent number of the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, liv, p. 181 ff. But I gladly embrace the opportunity to give a general view of the results of my own investigations on this subject up to the present time, and thus both to correct and to amplify the views put forward by me in a former part (JAOS., vol. xvii, p. 2), whilst at the same time endeavouring to show within what limits Bloomfield's position is really tenable.

Professor Bloomfield, then, admits that the Vedic hymns are capable of division "into at least two classes, each differing from the other in lexicon, grammar, style, and metrical habits." We may at once notice that whilst hymns of both kinds are found in the R̥ig Veda, the Atharva Veda employs the 'popular' dialect only. This we might expect from its subject-matter, for a glance at any one of Prof. Bloomfield's books shows it to be almost entirely composed of 'charms friendly or hostile.' Prof. Bloomfield indeed suggests that a few hymns may be found in the AV. which are hieratic in character, such as v. 1, 20 and vi. 61; but this view will not bear examination, at any rate as regards the

hymns specifically named. Not that the hymns of the AV., still less its prose writings, are all of one period ; but that those which differ from the general standard differ in a still closer approximation to the dialect and style of the Brāhmaṇas. Nor again can the charms of the Rig Veda be said in the strictest sense to be in the same dialect as those of the Atharva Veda ; a large number of the hymns are indeed identical, but the language and metre reappears in the Atharva Veda in an altered and apparently in a later form. But by disregarding minor differences we may rightly classify together the 'charms' of the Rig Veda and the hymns of the Atharva Veda as a whole on the one side ; and the remaining part of the Rig Veda, which from its much greater bulk we may reasonably name the 'Rig Veda proper,' on the other.

The next questions appear to be two : (1) Can the Rig Veda proper be separated by a sharp line from the Rig Vedic charms ? and (2) can the Rig Veda proper itself be further divided on historical principles ?

With regard to the first question, there is seldom any difficulty in distinguishing the 'hymns addressed to given deities' from those that 'aim at a specific object.' There are, however, two groups of hymns that fall under neither description. Many hymns have for their object the glorification of the sacrificial instruments ; such are the *Āpra* and *Āpriya* hymns, and those described in the Anukramaṇī as addressed to *Grāvāṇaḥ*, *Rtvijāḥ*, *Gāvāḥ*, *Havirdhānaḥ* and the like 'deities.' Others are epic or dramatic in their character ; such are those which embody the myths of *Indra and Çavasī*, of *Yama and Yamī*, of *Indra and Indrāṇī*, of *Agni and the Devāḥ* and many others. These we may call the 'ritual hymns' and the 'mythological poems' respectively. Again there is no difficulty, other than the magnitude of the task, in defining the differences of dialect and metre which distinguish the 'hymns' and the 'charms.' It then appears that the 'ritual hymns' and the 'mythological poems' occupy a position midway between the better recognized groups ; but that the 'ritual hymns' stand on the whole nearer to the 'hymns,' and the 'mythological poems' nearer to the 'charms.' We have, therefore, every indication of a continuous development, and the drawing of a line is from this point of view arbitrary. It has, however, a certain practical convenience, and I shall now endeavor to show to what degree of precision it may be done, referring the reader for further explanations and details

to my recent article in KZ. xxxvii. 4, on "The second Maṇḍala of the Rig Veda."

From a rough division of these two parts we may draw up a list of linguistic criteria of the dialects. The principle upon which such a list is drawn up is unimportant, since any and every list necessarily leads to the same results, provided only that it is long enough. In my list (KZ. xxxvii. 4, pp. 440-452) there are 230 criteria of 'hieratic' diction, with nearly 18,000 examples in RV., and 260 criteria of 'popular' diction, with 4,000 examples. In the face of this mass of evidence, penetrating into every verse of the Rig Veda, evidence of other kinds is almost superfluous.

But to apply this evidence in wholesale fashion to whole Maṇḍalas at a time would be unscientific, since every Maṇḍala contains writings of the two kinds under discussion. It is first necessary to divide the Rig Veda into parts really homogeneous, that is, into its separate hymns or (in the case of composite hymns) parts of hymns.

The following are in round figures my results. The Rig Veda contains 1028 hymns, of which over 800 appear to be simple, and about 220 are composite, and consist of some 780 parts. A large proportion of the latter are short hymns of three verses, which are massed together in the *textus receptus* in the way of which hymns ix. 61-68 are the most striking example. For our present purpose we may say that the Rig Veda consists of 1600 hymns. Of these 920 consist of five or more stanzas, 600 of four, three, or two stanzas each, and about 80 are detached verses. Of the 920 hymns of some length 640 show the 'hieratic' criteria in the proportion of at least five to one, and 120 in the proportion of at least two to one: 65 shew the 'popular' criteria in the proportion of at least five to one, and 20 in the proportion of at least two to one. That is to say, we can assign 725 hymns with certainty to one or the other of the dialects, and 140 with fair probability, leaving 55 only, or about 6 per cent., on the border line. Of the hymns that contain from two to four stanzas, 380 can similarly be assigned with certainty and 160 with probability, leaving 60 or 10 per cent. on the border line. In the case of detached verses the doubtful element reaches 25 per cent. of the whole number. If we consider the bulk of the hymns concerned, it will be safe to say that the whole range of doubt does not exceed one-tenth of the

matter of the Rig Veda; of that tenth a large part will be found to be made up of the 'ritual hymns' and 'mythological poems,' which are also distinguished by their subject-matter.

With regard to the 'Rig Veda proper,' the further question now arises whether it is capable of further division? To judge by subject-matter and dialect, the first answer must be in the negative: there are no such obvious differences as we have hitherto followed. But even at first sight the contrasts of metre are striking. In some hymns of the Rig Veda we find all the verses that compose a stanza to be of even length: in others, of uneven length. Here we find metres which even in the AV. are practically unknown: there, the same metres as are used in classical Sanskrit. A closer inspection reveals differences which are even more important. The inner structure of the verse, whether of eight, eleven or twelve syllables, is found in a number of hymns to be based on models substantially different from those in favor in Sanskrit verse generally. I fear it may be assuming too much to call the metres that are, either in their inner or their outer structure, strange to the Atharva Veda and later poetry 'archaic,' but perhaps for the present purpose I may use the name 'pre-classical.' The 'pre-classical metres' then are the 'lyric' metres, such as Uṣṇih Br̥hatī and Atyaṣṭi, which differ both in their internal and in their external structure, and the 'decasyllabic'¹ and the 'iambic'¹ Triṣṭubh and the early Anuṣṭubh, which differ in their internal structure only. Now I have shown in this Journal (vol. xviii, p. 2 ff.) that the hymns written in the 'pre-classical' metres are marked by the fact that they contain a far larger proportion of 'hieratic' grammatical forms to 'popular' than the Rig Veda as a whole shows, that is to say, that they are hieratic to an extreme degree: and I have also indicated in KZ., vol. xxxiv, 4 ff., that their subject-matter is marked by the special adoration of the group of gods called Ādityas side by side with the national deity Indra. We have, therefore, an accumulation of evidence pointing to the conclusion that the hymns composed in these metres are distinct in character, and presumably earlier in date, as compared with the remaining hymns of the 'Rigveda proper.' A sharp line between this group of hymns and the rest

¹ For the definition of these terms see KZ. *loc. cit.*, above, p. 312.

of the Rig Veda I do not pretend to draw : the general distinction I believe to be proven.

These groups then, the Rig Veda of the ' pre-classical ' metres, the rest of the Rig Veda proper, the ritual hymns, the mythological poems, the charms of the Rig Veda, the charms of the Atharva Veda, and the prose of the Atharva Veda form a succession of which the order is fixed. It need not necessarily be conceived as directly an order of time. We could think of the writings as the work of seven different provinces, in the order of their longitude : and indeed a distinction between Western and Eastern poetry has often been suggested. We could think of them as the products of seven different social classes ; this would be on the lines of the solution suggested by Bloomfield. But it appears to me all these points of view are substantially equivalent to an order of time. The literature of the Ganges is the literature of the Indian people when they had passed through further stages of development since the time when they passed the Indus : and the ' hieratic ' diction of a priestly class is everywhere the diction of a class which has retained the manner (side by side with the metre) of the men of an earlier century. Therefore I look upon it as an over-refinement when Professor Bloomfield writes : " the proximity of the language of the genuine Atharvanic hymns to that of the Brāhmaṇas and Classical Literature is no chronological criterion." It is true that we cannot fix from such considerations the year, or even the century, in which a particular hymn of the Atharva Veda was written : but we are, I think, justly entitled to conclude that the whole mental attitude of the writers was in a corresponding degree approaching to that in which the Brāhmaṇas and the Classical Literature were produced.

Of simultaneous development on parallel lines the Vedas show no trace. How steady and continuous the course of grammatical change is I have endeavored to show in my *Historical Vedic Grammar*. I now propose to give a very short sketch of the similar development of metre : a field in which precise measurements are readily available, and yet one which Bloomfield has, a little recklessly, selected to illustrate a hastily-conceived theory. In the RV., he tells us, the first pāda of the Anuṣṭubh hemistich regularly ends in ॐ - ॐ ॐ, in the Epic śloka in ॐ - - ॐ ; the Atharvanic or popular Anuṣṭubh permits not only these, but all other possible feet of four syllables.

This freer measurement stands nearer to the Avestic non-quantitative eight-syllable line, and is therefore the earliest form of the Anuṣṭubh ; from it the 'hieratic' and the 'epic' Anuṣṭubh are sister developments.

This theory may seem in itself plausible : but even if we were justified in setting aside the linguistic evidence, I should still make the objection that its basis is too narrow and too inexactly traced. The 'hieratic' and 'popular' Anuṣṭubh are types which differ normally in one syllable only out of sixteen which form the hemistich : for the first half of each verse has the prevailing rhythm $\bar{u} - \bar{u}$ - in both metres alike, and the rhythm $\bar{u} - \bar{u} \bar{u}$ is in each established at the end of the second verse. Two such metres must have some nearer point of contact than the non-metrical Avestan verse.

Secondly, the 'epic' ending $\bar{u} - - \bar{u}$ in the first verse of each hemistich is rare in the Rig Vedic charms, much commoner in the Atharva Veda, and fully established only in the epic poetry : yet (even according to Bloomfield) the Rig Vedic charms are of an older redaction than the Atharvanic. Let us take an example. RV. vi. 28. 8 runs :—

úpedám upapárcanam āsú góṣṭpa preyatām
úpa ṛṣabhásya rétasý úpendra táva víryè

The corresponding Atharvanic stanza (ix. 4, 23) is :

úpehópapárcanāsmín goṣṭhá úpa prñca naḥ
úpa ṛṣabhásya yád réta upéndra táva víryām

Pāda *a* has the 'hieratic' form in both versions : pāda *c* has the 'hieratic' form in the RV., and the 'popular' form in the AV. Now on the usual hypothesis the AV. version is readily explained as an adaptation of that of the RV. to a new development of the metre. But if the AV. version is here really the earlier, why has the RV. poet altered it, seeing that in no case is the stanza of 'hieratic' character?

Let us consider the earlier point of view more in detail. The Anuṣṭubh of the Rig Veda proper has the same type for each verse of eight syllables, that is $\bar{u} - \bar{u} - \bar{u} (\bar{u}) \bar{u} \bar{u}$. The general rhythm is iambic : but in the early part of the verse the short syllables may be replaced freely by long, whilst in the latter part the only permissible variation (beyond that of the *syllaba anceps*) is the shortening of the sixth syllable, which is

by rule long. The 'popular' Anuṣṭubh however divides the stanza into two hemistichs, each of 16 syllables. So far from being generally a 'freer' meter than the 'hieratic' Anuṣṭubh, it is in the last four syllables much stricter, rejecting altogether the short antepenult. But it shows a wavering in the second section of four syllables, inclining to make both the sixth and the seventh syllables long. These syllables, which from the 'hieratic' standpoint belong to the end of the verse, now belong to the first half of the hemistich: what more natural than that the tendency to shorten should, not without a period of wavering, give way to the tendency to lengthen?

Let us turn from the Anuṣṭubh stanza, which after all is a rare metre in the Rig Veda, to more characteristic metres. In the first place we have the important group of metres which are based upon the combination of verses of eight and twelve syllables, such as Bṛhatī (8, 8, 12, 8), Satobṛhatī (12, 8, 12, 8), and Uṣṇih (8, 8, 12). These metres I have ventured to group together under the title 'lyric.' Historically they are perhaps all variations of the Anuṣṭubh (8, 8, 8, 8), and therefore later in date: but the Anuṣṭubh metre in some form existed from Indo-Iranian days, and these variations may well be coincident with the earliest period of Vedic poetry. I have already stated that all the hymns in these metres have a marked 'hieratic' character in their vocabulary and grammatical forms. Of the 8-syllable verses we need say no more than that they are identical in their inner structure with the 'hieratic' Anuṣṭubh. The history of the 12-syllable verse (whether in the 'lyric' metres, or in the Triṣṭubh and Jagatī hymns which have the same inner structure) is more intricate. I propose to compare it first with the 12-syllable verse (or the corresponding 11-syllable Triṣṭubh verse) of the Rig Veda proper, and secondly with the same verse of the AV. The forms differ throughout according as the caesura follows the fourth or the fifth syllable.

If the caesura follows the fifth syllable, the types are

- (a) ॐ - ॐ - ॐ || (ॐ) ॐ (ॐ) ॐ (ॐ) ॐ ॐ
 (b) ॐ - ॐ - (ॐ) || ॐ ॐ - ॐ - ॐ ॐ
 (c) the same as (b).

Now both these forms depart from a strict iambic type chiefly in that syllables before the caesura may be lengthened, and after

the caesura may or must be shortened.¹ With regard to the eighth and tenth syllables the lyric metre gives occasional short values not permitted elsewhere, just as the 'hieratic' Anuṣṭubh gives an occasional short sixth: whereas the cadence of the popular metre is strictly determined. With regard to the fifth and the sixth syllables, the lyric metre uses a short or long fifth indifferently, the 'popular' metre a long fifth much more often: the lyric metre uses a long sixth fairly often, the popular metre never. In both points the popular metre shows the increasing prevalence of the principle "lengthen before the caesura, shorten after it" (as contrasted with a uniform iambic rhythm) up to the seventh syllable inclusive: in the remaining syllables the popular metre shows a more rigid adherence to the iambic type.

If the caesura follows the fourth syllable, the types are

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|-----|--|---|-----|-----|---|-----|---|---|
| (a) | υ | - | υ | (υ) | | υ | (υ) | (υ) | υ | (υ) | υ | υ |
| (b) | υ | - | υ | - | | υ | υ | (υ) | - | υ | - | υ |
| (c) | υ | - | υ | - | | υ | υ | (υ) | - | υ | - | υ |

the two forms (b) and (c) gradually passing one into the other. The 'lyric' form shows an occasional *shortening* before the caesura: after it it frequently preserves the iambic form υ - υ, yet generally shortens the sixth syllable, and lengthens the seventh: the latter change is not to be explained by the general principles so far laid down, and I suggest it may be due to the influence of the other type of the 12-syllable verse, which has normally the succession υ υ - after the caesura. Form (b) differs from (a) only in a greater rigidity throughout. Form (c) is marked by an increasing favour shows to a long fifth syllable, a further divergence from the iambic type.

It appears to me that on the whole the relation of the types (a) (b) (c) can be very naturally explained on the supposition that they are successive developments from a type which was originally a loose iambic rhythm, under the general principles of lengthening

¹ This law (which also applies to the Anuṣṭubh verse), was, so far as I know, first laid down in principle by R. Kühnau in a work which has hardly received the recognition which it deserves (*Die Trishṭubh-Jagati Familie*, Göttingen, 1886). He writes "die Länge der dritten Silbe dient dazu dem ersten Abschnitte der rhythmischen Reihe das an Schwere zuzusetzen, was der zweite an Länge voraus hat." The history of the verse in classical times, as he shows, gives an emphatic assertion of this principle.

before the caesura, shortening after the caesura, and making the cadence rigidly correct. That the changes (if isolated from the linguistic differences found in the same hymns) might be plausibly explained in the order (c) (b) (a) I do not deny, but I certainly do not think such an explanation easier, nor is it in harmony with the direction of the development of the metre in classical times.¹ But that these developments can be explained as parallel and independent variations seems to me impossible.

If, however, the normal type of the 11- and 12-syllable verses is approximately the same for a great part of the Rig Veda and for the Atharva Veda, there are other points of metrical divergence. In the Atharva Veda, verses of 11 and of 12 syllables are inextricably confused in the same stanzas: 'short metre' continually interchanges with 'long': scraps of prose are interspersed: and the metres of all kinds are defective and irregular. In Bloomfield's words, "It is frequently difficult to determine whether a passage is merely cadenced prose, or doggerel metre, or originally good metre spoiled by interpolations and additions." In the AV. as we possess it we have either verse degenerating into prose (in M. Jourdain's sense), or we have prose gradually elevating itself into verse. The former suggestion recommends itself to me the more readily.

To sum up this discussion: there is nothing in the language, metre, or subject-matter of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda which cannot be consistently explained upon the hypothesis that both are the work of one school of bards, developing, maintaining, and finally losing hold of their art in a succession of generations. Yet Professor Bloomfield's reminder that an artificial diction may be used by such a school is not without its value. By its means I find a reasonable explanation of a point which long puzzled me, namely, why in passing from the ritual hymns to the mythological poems we find a sudden and violent change of vocabulary and of grammatical forms, and yet practically no change of metre. If the language of the later hymns was largely traditional, we can understand that when once its hold loosened the linguistic changes would be numerous, whilst the development of metre might actually be arrested by this diversion of interest. In other words, I am prepared to accept Prof. Bloom-

¹ See Kühnau, *op. cit.*, p. 317, note.

field's principle, if its application be restricted to those parts of the Rig Veda which have at least the metre in common.

But, Prof. Bloomfield asks, are not charms of immemorial antiquity ? and if so, how can we place them later in time than the hymns of the same people ? The answer seems simple. The people of the Rig Veda, it is very probable, were prone to magic as their forefathers had been. But this magic had not become the parent of literary art : it had not commanded the services of the bards. The poetry of India, as of Israel, arose from the united motives of patriotism and religion : the patriotism of an invading race, the religion of a people whose eyes were nevertheless raised from earth to heaven. In both cases the poetry of religion and country has been preserved to us in its primitive form by the sacred character it has assumed. The charms, the domestic ceremonies (shall we say too the love poems and war-dances of the same peoples ?) have not been preserved to us so well ; those that we have, in their present literary form, are unmistakably later. Nor can we with any certainty conjecture, even dimly, from the material before us what that primitive form was. The mystery, so long jealously guarded, of the Pāipalāda recension of the Atharva Veda can alter nothing in this : whatever its publication may do for us, it will assuredly not give us an Atharvan text that can compare for antiquity with the text of the Rig Veda. The predecessors of the Atharvan charms are already published in the text of the Rig Veda, of which they form by every rule of evidence the latest part.

Professor Bloomfield's services to Sanskrit literature are of too long standing and too widely recognized not to be able to support the burden of a single mistake. Yet his example once more points the moral which Professor Oldenberg has lately endeavored to enforce, that of all the startling innovations proposed in Vedic criticism during the last generation not one has led to any solid advance. It is by steady and persevering work in detail alone that such progress is now being made. Of such work Professor Bloomfield has done much on the field of the Atharva Veda : for a critical comparison of that book with the Rig Veda he has never equipped himself, and on this subject he can hardly claim to speak with authority. At the same time, I cannot claim that this brief statement constitutes a proof of the theory I myself advance. Those who desire to satisfy themselves to which side the balance of evidence inclines, or to make some

advance on results already attained, must be prepared to consider in detail the evidence itself. To do so is necessarily a laborious task, and may seem to most a wearisome one. Nevertheless I hope soon to put before Orientalists in a consecutive form my own collections of facts, trusting thereby to make the road of discovery a little easier to those who come after me. As my own work is built upon the basis established by Whitney, Avery, Lanman, Edgren, Haskell and others in the earlier numbers of the *Journal*, I trust that this summary of results will not be found altogether out of place here.